

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 ACDA-07 TRSE-00 /099 W
-----118957 122125Z /63

R 120912Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5216
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 4890

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS PDIP PINT PBOR EG ET IS SO UR
SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR'S PARTING COMMENTS

1. EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR SALAH BASSIOUNY IS LEAVING ADDIS
AUGUST 12 TO ASSUME NEW DUTIES IN BUDAPEST. AS ONE OF THE
MORE COLORFUL DIPLOMATS IN TOWN AS WELL AS SOURCE FOR SOME
OF JUICIEST RUMORS, BASSIOUNY WILL BE MISSED. WE ALSO RATE
HIM AS GOOD FRIEND OF U.S.

2. DURING FINAL TALK WITH HIM THIS WEEK, BASSIOUNY WAS SHADE
MORE RESTRAINED THAN USUAL. HE HAD FOLLOWING COMMENTS OF
SOME NOTE:

A. ISRAEL - FOR ONCE, HE DID NOT FIND ISRAELIS EVERY-
WHERE IN ETHIOPIA. HE THOUGHT THERE WERE ONE OR TWO
"LIAISON" PEOPLE IN ADDIS WHO WERE AUGMENTED FROM TIME
TO TIME BY ADVISORY PERSONNEL, BUT MADE NO OTHER CLAIMS.

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HE DID SAY PMAC VICE CHAIRMAN ATNAFU HAD MADE SECRET
VISIT TO TEL AVIV ON AUGUST 2 AND RETURNED TO ADDIS
AUGUST 3 (HE TOLD BRITISH CHARGE SAME THING, ADDING TO
HIM THAT ANOTHER DELEGATION FOLLOWED ATNAFU TO ISRAEL,
AND BOTH OF US HAVE SOME DOUBT ABOUT ACCURACY OF REPORT).
BASSIOUNY SPECULATED REASON FOR TRIP WAS TO SEEK AMMO
AND SPARE PARTS FOR AMERICAN MILITARY EQUIPMENT (AFTER

TELLING HIM I HAD NOT HEARD OF TRIP, I REMINDED HIM OF U.S. LAWS ABOUT THIRD-COUNTRY TRANSFERS).

B. DISILLUSIONMENT WITH SOVIETS - HE CLAIMED EXCELLENT SENIOR ETHIOPIAN SOURCE HAD TOLD HIM THERE WAS GROWING DISILLUSION WITHIN DIRG WITH SOVIETS AS RESULT OF CONTINUING ETHIOPIAN SETBACKS IN OGADEN AND THAT THIS WAS CAUSING SOME DIRG MEMBERS TO REASSESS ETHIOPIA'S RELATIONS WITH CERTAIN OTHER COUNTRIES, INCLUDING APPARENTLY EGYPT. NOT ONLY WAS BASSIOUNY'S FAREWELL CALL ON VICE CHAIRMAN WELL REPORTED IN MEDIA, BUT BASSIOUNY SAID IN GREAT CONFIDENCE THAT EPMG WAS PLANNING ON SENDING A MISSION TO CAIRO TO EXPLAIN WHERE ETHIOPIA STOOD.

C. MENGISTU - MENGISTU HAD REACHED HIS CRISIS POINT AS RESULT SETBACKS IN OGADEN AND ERITREA. NEXT COUPLE OF WEEKS COULD WELL DETERMINE HIS STATUS WITHIN EPMG. ERITREAN INSURGENTS WERE NOW CONCENTRATING ON ASSAB AND LEAVING ASMARA MORE OR LESS ALONE. WHEN TIME COMES TO OCCUPY ASMARA, INSURGENTS WILL TELL SECOND DIVISION THAT ROAD TO ADDIS IS OPEN AND THEY FREE TO GO. APPEARANCE OF SECOND DIVISION VETERANS IN ADDIS WOULD THEN PRESUMABLY HAVE CONSEQUENCES FOR POSITION OF DIRG.

D. OGADEN - HE HAD NO HARDER INFO ON SITUATION ON SECRET

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GROUND IN OGADEN THAN WE DID. ACCORDING HIS INFO, WESTERN SOMALI LIBERATION FRONT AND OROMO LIBERATION FRONT BOTH HAD CONSIDERABLE CADRE IN ADDIS ITSELF.

E. HIS REPLACEMENT - IT NOW EIGHT WEEKS SINCE AGREEMENT REQUESTED. WE BOTH AGREED THAT IF EPMG WERE NOW TO GRANT AGREEMENT, GIVEN RECENT HISTORY, THIS WOULD BE A GOOD SIGN FOR ETHIO-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS AND PERHAPS FOR RELATIONS WITH SOME OF ETHIOPIA'S ERSTWHILE OTHER FAVORITE TARGETS.

3. COMMENT: WHILE IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN NECESSARY TO SORT WHEAT FROM CHAFF WITH BASSIOUNY, HE HAS BEEN NONETHELESS ONE OF BETTER-INFORMED DIPLOMATS HERE. HE COULD ALSO BE VERY HONEST. WHEN TAKING LEAVE OF DIP CORPS, HE SAID HIS TRANSFER WAS AT HIS OWN REQUEST. SINCE HE NO LONGER HAD MEANINGFUL RAPPORT WITH ETHIOPIAN LEADERSHIP AND WAS UNABLE GET EGYPTIAN MESSAGE ACROSS, IT WAS BETTER THAT HE LEFT AND THAT SOMEONE ELSE START REBUILDING. IN FACT, IT WAS OUR IMPRESSION HE DID HAVE SOME USEFUL CONTACTS WITHIN DIRG, ALTHOUGH LIKE MOST AMBASSADORS HERE, HIS ACCESS TO THE TOP WAS DISTINCTLY LIMITED.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AMBASSADORS, PERSONNEL MOVEMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 12-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
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Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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From: ADDIS ABABA
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TAGS: MASS, PDIP, PINT, PBOR, EG, ET, IS, SO, UR, (BASSIOUNY, SALAH)
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